

MONTANA PUBLIC DEFENDER COMMISSION
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING

State Capitol, Room 152

July 24, 2009

Draft Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting of the IT Committee of the Montana Public Defender Commission was called to order at 10:45 a.m. by Commissioner Tara Veazey.

Commissioners Present

Caroline Fleming, Miles City, Mike Sherwood, Missoula; Tara Veazey, Helena; Stephen Nardi, Kalispell; Jennifer Hensley, Butte; Kenneth Olson, Great Falls; and Richard (Fritz) Gillespie, Helena

Other Interested Parties

Randi Hood, Chief Public Defender; Harry Freebourn, Administrative Director; Eric Olson, Training Coordinator; Tammy Hinderman, Appellate Defender Office; Scott Crichton, American Civil Liberties Union of Montana (ACLU); and Judge Sheldon Singer, representing the American University evaluation team. Sandra Law, IT Manager and Heidi Henry, JustWare User Support, attended by teleconference.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the July 17, 2008 meeting was deferred because no committee members were present.

Purpose of Committee

Commissioner Veazey said that this committee will be very important going forward in light of the American University recommendations, and she would like to see additional members on the committee (currently there are only two). She asked the committee to consider adding information on technology/data needs at their next meeting.

Examples of Past Responsibilities

Mr. Freebourn gave a brief history of the case management system. Three of the county offices were already using JustWare when OPD inherited those office operations. The Commission chose to adopt it partly due to this ability to launch it quickly since it was in use in some of the larger offices. It was originally used just as a tool for the offices to track client information. During the first year, the decision was made to also use it for management reporting.

Currently, licenses are available for almost everyone in the system. The original training focused first on administrative staff and the Central Office, then attorneys. Now attorneys are being asked to use JustWare for time tracking, and a new training effort is underway, with Heidi Henry acting as the lead trainer. Commissioner Veazey said that this is a critical training need that should be addressed in a systemic way through Mr. Olson.

Mr. Freebourn said that the new case numbers coming into system are 98% accurate. The focus for the past year has been on closing cases and a certification process has been implemented. Closing contract cases has been more difficult, but efforts continue to close those cases in a timely fashion. This will result in being able to report on net cases, per Pat Gervais' request.

Disposition data should be ready to go into the production environment soon. It will not capture historical data, which is currently in free form text format, which makes reporting difficult. The new format will include drop down menus and check boxes to allow better data collection.

Commissioner Veazey asked for a JustWare demonstration and it was decided to present it for the entire Commission rather than just the IT Committee. She also requested a written training plan, and an agenda item at a future meeting to go through the entire AU report as it relates to data collection and analysis and create a realistic implementation plan.

Current responsibilities/activities

- IT Reorganization

- IT Strategic Plan (To be presented at the next meeting for Commission input.)

- Case Management System—see above discussion

- Brief Bank

- The brief bank is up and running, but it needs more briefs. Mr. Olson said that the last week of August is dedicated to screening and loading as many briefs as possible. A demonstration will be provided with the JustWare demonstration.

Public Comment

Tammy Hinderman said that the Appellate Office doesn't keep time or have access to JustWare. Chief Hood said that the big push to get attorneys to track time is in response to SB 263, which does not apply to the appellate program.

Old Business/New Business (*Action Items)

There were no action items.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.